

CONSTITUTION 101

CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL SOYO

When: July 25, 2006

Where: Bolivar, Pennsylvania (Leadership Training at Antiochian Village)

Who: NAC SOYO President George Sackllah; Metropolitan PHILIP; NAC SOYO Spiritual Advisor Fr. Anthony Yazge; Department of Youth Ministry Chairman Fr. Joseph Purpura;

-Recorded and Received by NAC SOYO Secretary Katherine Atty

-Also signed off on by Diocesan Presidents: Lauren Malouf (DLAW); Caroline El-Chaar

(DOECUNY); Rebecca Phillips (Miami); Matthew Yazge (Midwest); Stephen Shadid (Eastern

Region); Tarek Salti (DOWAMA); Nicholas Abdelahad (New England)

-Additional signatures of Diocesan and NAC serve to “witness the adoption of this Constitution”

As you can see, this was a BIG DEAL.

Why:

Fr. Purpura: *The Old Constitution did not take into account:*

1. *The New Youth Platform adopted in 1990 – “Living the Orthodox Faith in Christ, through Worship, Witness, Service and Fellowship”, the New one does.*
2. *The establishment of the nine dioceses with their own Bishops. The new Constitution addressed that we were no longer based on “Regions” but now dioceses, with Bishops assigned to each of those Dioceses. We needed to first adopt a new NAC SOYO Constitution, so we could then write new Diocesan SOYO Constitutions to address the new status of Dioceses with Bishops.*

The initial Draft of the NAC Constitution was done by Fr Joseph Purpura with comments from the Spiritual Advisors and Youth Directors of NAC and the Dioceses. This Draft with comments and changes by the Diocesan Advisors was then submitted for comment to all of the Diocesan and NAC SOYO Officers for comments and input prior to the 2006 SOYO Leadership Conference and Meetings. It was that draft that was discussed and finally adopted in the 2006 Summer Meetings, as recorded in the attached minutes. There was a great deal of discussion and input from the teens that went into the final draft as adopted – this is somewhat reflected in the minutes, though the minutes do not fully capture just how much leadership and ownership the teens took in the final development of the Constitution. The fact that it was not only unanimously adopted, but also signed by everyone present, at the request of all the teens is testament to how much ownership the teens took at that meeting for the final product of the Constitution.

Fr Joseph wrote the new diocesan Constitutions based on the newly adopted NAC SOYO Constitution, as Diocesan Chapters are required to have a Constitution that is in conformity with NAC. Again, the diocesan ones were done to reflect the new status of the dioceses. All of the Diocese have adopted the new Diocesan Constitution.

There were additional reasons for the need of a new Constitution as well. The old Constitution was written at a time when there was not a full time Chairman of the Department of Youth Ministry. Also the old Constitution was written at the time when NAC and the Diocese had lay advisors and not Youth Directors. SOYO itself has matured and grown and the new Constitution was also written to account for that maturity and growth, especially SOYO's spiritual growth. The old Constitution was also written at a time when Teen SOYO was more closely tied to and overseen by then Senior SOYO as a Junior SOYO group. The new Constitution reflects SOYO as the Youth Movement of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America as designated by Metropolitan PHILIP.

George Sackllah: *We started discussing a revision of this document when I was VP of NAC during the Mid-winter meetings of 2006. The goal was to have each diocese go over the old Constitution and change what they believed was necessary. We would then meet up during the summer meetings and just go over and add what was needed. Well, that didn't happen. After I was elected president, this became the goal to attain for the summer meetings. We started discussing strategy on how to separate and conquer this. The entire board decided to separate each diocese board (have all the presidents together in a group, VP in another, etc). Then assign a different youth advisor and spiritual advisor to each group. Each group had a section of the old Constitution they were supposed to revise and edit (this took 24 hours, we were non stop).*

Then I believe after everyone was done we all got together and read over the revisions. We added and subtracted what was needed. The goal was to have an overall flow and something each diocese can look at and emulate to their constitution. The main reason we re-wrote the constitution is because the previous document was too old. We needed to change it because times were different. SOYO wanted more responsibility, and a bigger voice within our archdiocese. With this new Constitution we were showing not only the archdiocese but also Metropolitan Philip that we as teens are capable in getting things done and have ideas that can help our Archdiocese.

After 10 to 20 revisions we finally finished it. I remember at some point during the revision period we got into some very heated debates. But, in all, I have never seen such a cohesion between people to work together and finish a goal. Everyone in that room was proud of the work they did.

Now let's turn to the **Preamble**. A constitution is a document that sets the guidelines for the purpose, laws, and behavior of an organization. Think of the United States Constitution. Every constitution is prefaced by a few words explaining the background reasons why the constitution in question is being drafted. In formal constitution-talk, each of these explanatory sentences is introduced with the term "WHEREAS:". Our NAC SOYO Constitution outlines in its Preamble, among other things, four key tenets of the Orthodox Church: Worship, Witness, Service, and Fellowship (see the SOYO logo). After these whereas statements, the Preamble ends with a resolution, introduced, "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:". In our case, the resolution is [quote it]

What:

-Article 1: Name and Authority

-Here, we state our name (NAC SOYO for this constitution) and our allegiance (the Archbishop (Primate)--not named, as this person's identity could change over the duration of the constitution's existence)

-Article 2: Purpose of the Council

-Here we state the purpose of NAC SOYO, which is to support, educate, and bring together the youth of the Archdiocese, while fulfilling our commitment as Orthodox Christians to bear witness to Christ and his Church.

-We mention here also our commitment to the continuation of SOYO programs (and founding of new ones).

-Article 3: Powers of the Council

-IMPORTANT TO NOTE: In this section, there is an emphasis on how NAC SOYO is under the supervision of both the Primate and advisors.

-[explain explain explain]

-Article 4: Membership

-Who needs to be at meetings? With the exception of summer meetings (Leadership Training), only the NAC officers, NAC Spiritual Advisor, Archdiocese Youth Director, 2 teen delegates from each Diocese, and one Advisor (Spiritual or Youth) delegate from each Diocese; note that these are only the required attendees--Dioceses may send additional delegates (ie, all officers and advisors). All officers must be present at summer meetings.

-Who can vote? Each officer (NAC and Diocesan) and advisor (NAC and Diocesan Youth Directors and Spiritual Advisors) has **one vote each**. Teens who are not elected officers but who are present at meetings because they are running for office (eg. me at last year's

Leadership Training) **are not eligible to vote**. Also, “**Voting members may only vote in person and not by proxy,**” so you can’t have someone else vote in your place.

-Article 5: Voting

-Can only take place when a meeting has a quorum (we will define this later in the constitution)

-We will only vote by secret ballot when a member of the Council requests it.

-Article 6: Officers

- We define the officers of NAC SOYO as **President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.**

-**NAC SOYO officers must be between the ages of 16 and 20 by the day of their election.** By contrast, the age limit for general membership **on the parish level is 13-19.**

-No NAC officer may serve for more than 2 consecutive terms in any one office.

-Article 7: Committees

-The president may appoint committees with approval from the AYD and NAC SOYO SA

-The Chairpersons of each committee will be appointed by the President (w/ advice of...)

-Chairpersons of permanent committees will serve as members of NAC SOYO and shall be present at all NAC SOYO regular meetings to report on activities of the committee.

-Members of each committee shall be appointed by the respective Chairperson (w/ advice...)

-Article 8: Advisors

-Primate will appoint the AYD and NAC SOYO SA; these two people will advise and direct SOYO on everything SOYO related.

-Article 9: Dioceses

- Boundaries of each Diocese to be determined by the Local Synod
- Each Diocesan SOYO is responsible for its government and membership; each has the right to a Constitution and By-Laws, which shall be approved by the Diocesan Bishop.
- If a Diocesan SOYO should cease to exist, its funds and files will become property of the Archdiocese.

-Article 10: Constitutional Amendments

- “Proposed Amendments to this Constitution shall be formally submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of any Official Meeting.”
- “The Secretary shall prepare and send a copy of all proposed Amendments to all members of NAC SOYO at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the Official Meeting in which the amendments will be considered.”
- Amendments to be ratified at Official Meetings (with quorum) by favorable vote from NAC SOYO and Primate’s approval

-Article 11: By-Laws of the Council

- Must be consistent with Constitution
- Approval contingent upon 2/3 favorable vote and with approval of Primate

-Article 12: Approval

- NAC SOYO Secretary must send any ratified amendments to the Primate for approval within ten business days after the ratification. Null and void if Primate rejects.

-Article 13: Dissolution of the Council

- Should this happen, all properties and funds shall revert ownership to the Archdiocese and will be held in trust for NAC SOYO until SOYO may resume activity.

***** End of Constitution *****

By-Laws

- **Article 1: Meetings**
 - Calls for Annual Summer Meeting and Annual Mid Winter Meeting; Special meetings may be called by President, Chairman of DYM or NAC SOYO SA upon majority request or special need.
 - President must send notification of date and time of every Official Meeting no later than 60 days before the date of the meeting.
 - **QUORUM:** Representation of at least 2 officers of NAC SOYO, AYD or SA, and 2/3 of the chartered Diocese SOYOs in good standing--if notice was given.
- **Article 2: Revenue**
 - Annual \$75 per parish dues (Missions and Parishes w/o Teen Youth Groups exempt). Due before Summer Meeting.
 - Treasurer is authorized to receive full list of parishes in each Diocese.
 - Any Diocese that is 6 months behind in paying dues “shall be considered not in good standing and shall forfeit their voting right until their back assessment is paid”
 - Council may still grant voting rights to such a Diocese by majority vote (or w/ advice...)
- **Article 3: Duties of the Dioceses**
 - Send biographical info to AYD w/in 14 days of each election.
 - Send President and delegate to all regular meetings; failure to have at least 2 delegates at regular meetings will be considered not in good standing.

- Shall submit minutes of any Diocesan official meeting to NAC SOYO President and AYD within 30 days of meeting.
- Shall submit written report of current activities at each NAC SOYO meeting; must include previous year's financial report at summer meeting.
- Not in good standing if failure to submit said reports...
- **Article 4: Duties of the Officers**
 - You should all be familiar with these already!
- **Election of Officers**
 - Shall happen at summer meeting; must be at least 16, an official delegate of their Diocesan SOYO, and present at election to be eligible for nomination. Must also be certified by Parish Priest...
 - Voting MUST be by secret ballot. NO VOTING BY PROXY.
 - Election will be determined by simple majority of votes. IN THE EVENT OF A TIE: there shall be a second vote with only the tied candidates eligible for election.
 - If an Officer resigns before installation, the runner-up will fill the vacancy; if the runner-up declines, the President shall fill the position by appointment and with the approval of the Executive Committee, AYD, and NAC SOYO SA.
- **Article 6: Delegates to National and International Organizations**
 - Elected delegates to each org. of which NAC SOYO is a member; NAC President shall be one delegate, others may be elected from the membership of NAC SOYO at discretion of NAC SOYO.
- **Article 7: Committees and Ministries**

- Special Olympics Ministry and Orthodox Youth Outreach (OYO) shall be permanent ministries of SOYO.
- Chairperson vacancies to be filled by President (w/ advice of...)
- **Article 8: Finances**
 - Fiscal year: August 1-July 31
 - Authorized signers: President, Treasurer, AYD, and NAC SOYO SA; 2 signatures required for all checks, one of which must be adult signature. Cannot sign a check for oneself.
 - “All reimbursements must include a receipt prior to being reimbursed.”
 - Council shall provide for transportation and lodging expense for Elected Officers, Spiritual Advisor, and certain designees and/or delegates. (see Constitution for specifics)
- **Article 9: Parliamentary Authority**
 - Robert’s Rules of Order!
- **Article 10: Amendments**
 - Amendments to By-Laws to be made as provided by Article 11 of the Constitution
- **Article 11: Approval**
 - NAC Secretary must send ratified amendments to By-Laws to Primate within 10 business days for approval.

***** END OF BY-LAWS *****